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7 August 1970

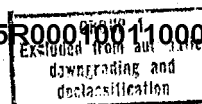
MEMORANDUM FOR: Deputy Director for Intelligence
THROUGH : Assistant Deputy Director for Intelligence
THROUGH : Chief, DDI Planning Staff
SUBJECT : CRS Possible Assumption of COINS

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1. This memorandum is for your background in considering the [redacted] suggestion that CRS assume full responsibility for COINS. This assignment is a part of the second alternative in their recommendation, now before Colonel White, for the solution of the unsatisfactory state of CIA participation in COINS. Their preferred solution is for CIA to step completely out.

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2. Continued CIA involvement in COINS is not logical in terms of perceptible benefits to the production of intelligence. COINS is based on the misconception that a significant number of machine files of value to large numbers of intelligence offices are held by each USIB member. The [redacted] preferred solution is recognition of the fallacy of the assumption and the limited value of COINS to CIA. Continued CIA involvement in COINS will result from a decision that the Agency must participate for the good of the community, in hope (however dim) of possible eventual benefits or as a demonstration of good faith for PFIAB and others interested in fostering automation as an end in itself.

3. Since at least the 1967 reorganization, CRS has attempted to devote its energy increasingly to the direct support of the production of intelligence in CIA and to reduce or eliminate programs that have other objectives. Assumption of the COINS responsibility would be a move back towards those other objectives. It could be a move costing several hundred thousand dollars/year in equipment rental fees. It would require at least three people, probably four or five and possibly more. It is the kind of task that you have repeatedly instructed CRS to abandon or avoid.

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25X1 4. The [] suggestion includes providing CRS with the required resources for the computer operation in support of COINS. Presumably, the assignment of the responsibility would be accompanied by those resources. For the first year or two, Colonel White, OPPB, et al would remember that the CRS budget includes resources to carry out the directed task. Soon, however, the genesis of the responsibility will be forgotten by at least parts of the budgetary chain. The resources will be swallowed up in the total CRS budget, the responsibility will be firmly tied to CRS and useful tasks might feel the pressure of budgetary or manpower constraints.

25X1 5. The [] solution picks CRS as the logical CIA locus of COINS responsibility because CRS is the "file builder". Early in COINS history, CRS built three files primarily for COINS. I am about to abandon one of these as a partial consequence of the FY 71 T/O cuts. CRS has not accepted more recent requests to build files for COINS. The recent attitude towards requests for files has been that COINS can have what exists, more or less "as is", and no more. The added resources for CRS in the [] proposal apparently do not include additional people to build files. Acceptance of the responsibility will put significantly more pressure on CRS to build or modify files for COINS. We do not have people to devote to building files for COINS. Building machine files is costly and building machine files for COINS has thus far been wasteful.

25X1 6. In sum, I do not think that COINS will help the Directorate or CRS to do its job. COINS clearly is not the kind of task that you have set for CRS. COINS will have a perceptible effect on the Directorate budget and T/O but not its productivity. The business of file building could get nasty and you would probably face distasteful alternatives. You could either: (1) direct CRS to waste resources and build files in response to COINS requests; or (2), as the Deputy Director wholly responsible for Agency participation in COINS, you could pick up the tag, "uncooperative." You could share it only with me. The tag is now shared throughout the Agency.

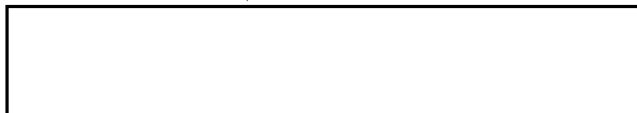
7. There are pros and cons to assigning the total responsibility for COINS to CRS. This paper is not intended as a balanced discussion. It is intended to make you aware that acceptance of the task should occur only with the recognition that COINS will be a long term responsibility with costs but no presently discernible gains for either the Directorate or CRS. If the question is asked in terms of the logic of putting COINS in CRS as opposed to OCS, I will probably vote for CRS.

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My reservation exists because I have not yet confirmed CRS' ability to handle the programming. This and other technical aspects and costs of the suggestion are being examined. Responsibility for COINS, however, is a thankless task for everyone concerned.



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Director, Central Reference Service

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